

# A fine investment

If further evidence was needed of the growing commercial success of the compound semiconductor industry, it is surely seen in the shape of the increasing interest from the investment community. A growing number of stockbroker firms have not only initiated coverage of firms in the industry, but are also listing them among their top buys.

The interest from the financial sector underlines the current success that firms are enjoying, as well as the growing awareness of the compound semiconductor industry outside its own narrow confines. Such recognition is crucially important to attract the levels of capital required to sustain the growth and innovation that will form the bedrock of future success.

This issue of raising awareness should not be understated. While a broader understanding of compound semiconductors is developing, misconceptions are still prevalent and can hamper progress. Too often outsiders such as the financial community still bundle them together with their Si counterparts, a particular problem at the moment when the media is full of stories on that sector's downturn, while the distinction between different products and technologies remains hazy. Ideally, these awareness issues should be tackled with cross-industry co-operation. A united voice will not only be heard louder and more clearly, but should also work out to be a more cost effective approach.

And nor should the idea of industry co-operation be limited solely to promotion purposes. A debate is already

emerging on the need for a 'roadmap' for the compound semiconductor industry, an area where the USA's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is taking a lead (see for example [www.eeel.nist.gov/812/itrcs.html](http://www.eeel.nist.gov/812/itrcs.html)). While a roadmap's fundamental purpose would be to direct technological development, it could also play an important role in associated areas such as promotion.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete our Reader's Survey. The response was excellent and has yielded a great deal of information with which we plan to further improve the magazine. Congratulations to T. Bruggeman of Bronkhorst High-Tech BV (Ruurlo, The Netherlands) who won the prize draw for the Sharp ZQ-650.



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